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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

- 1           1 (Currently Amended). A decoding apparatus providing decoding protection  
2   with a video data encoding method using a DCT (Discrete Cosine Transform) method  
3   of an MPEG algorithm, for operating on information which is transferred through a  
4   medium and comprises main data which are to be decoded, the apparatus comprising:  
5           means for detecting medium protection data which are also transferred through  
6   said medium;  
7           means for limiting ~~reproduction~~ decoding based upon at least a film  
8   classification system;  
9           means for generating apparatus protection data which comprise at least first  
10   apparatus protection data and second apparatus protection data,  
11           wherein said first apparatus protection data are specific to a region or a country  
12   in which said decoding apparatus is to be used, said first apparatus protection data  
13   [[being']] being fixed and unmodifiable by a user of said decoding apparatus and said  
14   second apparatus protection data being modifiable by the user to selectively define a  
15   plurality of protection levels including at least two levels which are respectively  
16   specific to adults and to children;  
17           means for defining a protection level based on said medium protection data and  
18   on said apparatus protection data, in combination; and

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19 means for executing decoding of said main data in accordance with said  
20 protection level,  
21 wherein the combination of said medium protection data and said first apparatus  
22 protection data specifies that said main data are decoded either in their entirety or not  
23 at all, and the combination of said medium protection data and said second apparatus  
24 protection data specifies that said main data are decoded in their entirety, partially, or  
25 not at all,  
26 wherein said data medium transfers both said medium protection data and said  
27 main data in an identical form.

1 2 (Original). A decoding apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said means for  
2 executing operates in response to said combination of said medium protection data  
3 with said first apparatus protection data to cause said decoding apparatus to decode  
4 said main data either in their entirety or not at all,  
5 said means for executing operating in response to said combination of said  
6 medium protection data and said second apparatus protection data to cause said  
7 decoding apparatus to decode said main data in their entirety, partially, or not at all.